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A

Funeral Sermon

Occasioned by the

DEATH

OF

Mr. WILLIAM RATHBAND,

An Aged and Learned Servant of Christ,

AND

Preached *Octob.* 13. 1695. at *Highgate.*

By *Samuel Slater*, M. A. Minister of the Gospel.

LONDON:

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To the much Esteemed

Mrs. SARAH RATHBAND
In *HIGHGATE.*

Dear Sister,

THat ſtroke which the wiſe God lately gave to your Family, did, and yet doth, as I doubt not, ſmart on your back, and pain you at the very heart. The wreſting of a loving Husband out of the boſom of an affectionate Wife, is not much unlike tearing the fleſh from the bones. Where indeed there is unſuitableneſs and diſcontent, a galling yoke between perſons ſo nearly related, Cohabitation is more uneaſy than Diſſolution. They are not like to grieve much for parting, who were a mutual vexation and torment. But I am perſuaded there was between you Conjugal Love, Kindneſs and Delight, and walking together as Heirs of the grace of life; whereupon ſeparation by Death, cannot but be a ſore Affliction to you who are left behind. Yet, a reflection upon ſuch a life, and the bleſſed conſequences of that Death which was the period of it, may very well prove a ſovereign Cordial to you, carrying along with it ſtrength and ſweetneſs, ſupport and comfort. God hath been graciouſly pleas'd to carry him through thoſe difficulties which he did encounter in his way, and to employ him in that honourable work of the Miniſtry which he lov'd and faithfully did, notwithſtanding there were many Adverſaries, and but very ſmall encouragement he received from the hands of men, who will give more to their Houſhold-ſervant, than to an Embaſſador of Chriſt; and he continued him in the world, and

in his work, to a good old age. When at laſt he had finiſhed his day and his work together, he entered into peace and reſt. And now while he rejoiceth in Fruition, do you rejoice in Hope. Long it will not be, ere he that ſhall come, will come, and carry us away too to our eternal home; therefore inſtead of an impotent mourning over our dead Relations and Friends, it is our main wiſdom and intereſt to prepare our ſelves for Death, that we may be found in a fitneſs for a better life, in a meetneſs for the inheritance of the Saints in light. *Hearing it was my* dear Brother's *deſire upon his Death-bed, that I would preach the* Funeral Sermon, *I did moſt readily apply to the work; and your ſelf afterward deſiring that what had been preached might be printed, I complied therein alſo, notwithſtanding multitude of buſineſs lying upon my hands; here you have it in the following ſheets. The good Lord accompany it with his Spirit and bleſſing upon you and others that heard, or ſhall read it, and thereby my deſire and deſign will be accompliſhed. Your ſelf I commend to the good will of him that* dwelt in the Buſh. *May the Ever-living and Ever-bleſſed God be your Husband, Comforter and Portion.*

DEAR SISTER,

Novemb. 8: 1695.

I am yours in the beſt Bonds,

SA. SLATER.

JOHN XVII. 13.

And now come I to thee.

IN the thirteenth Chapter of this Holy Goſpel we find our Lord Jeſus (in whoſe heart it was to fulfil all righteouſneſs) had celebrated the Paſſover with his Diſciples; at which *Judas* having received the Sop, went out immediately, leaving Chriſt and them behind him, but carrying the Devil in him. It was Night, and therefore, as he thought, a fit ſeaſon for that Work of Darkneſs, the betraying of his Lord and Maſter into the hands of his Enemies, who thirſted for his Blood. The Traitor being thus of his own accord withdrawn and gone, and our Saviour having none about him, but thoſe whom he knew to be his faithful and faſt Friends, preached unto them this his laſt, moſt ſweet and excellent Sermon, wherein his Lips dropt as an Honeycomb; beginning it at the Fourteenth Chapter, and continuing it to the end of the Sixteenth.

Therein he unboſoms himſelf to them, and ſpeaks his very heart in the Language of Love, affording to them precious and ſtrong Cordials for the bearing up of their hearts under his own departure from them (which he well-knew would be ſorely afflictive to their Spirits) and alſo under thoſe many and great Tribulations they would, during his abſence, meet with in the World, being ſent as a little Flock of Sheep among a company of ravenous Wolves, that would be ſet for fleecing and devouring them.

The Sermon being ended, which he delivered, that in him they might have Peace, knowing they had to do with a conquer'd Enemy, the World being overcome by him; we have him in this Chapter putting up a Prayer to his Father, wherein he firſt asked ſomething for himſelf, ver. 9. That *his Father would glorify him with his own ſelf, with that glory which he had with him before the world was.* He deſires the manifeſtation of that Glory which he had before the

World was, and his having it before the World was, ſpeaks his Subſiſtence or Being before the World was, and by conſequence his being from Eternity, and therefore God. He alſo prayed for his People, both thoſe that did at that time believe in him, and likewiſe thoſe that ſhould afterwards believe in him through their Word. The things he asked for them, were 1. That they might be ſanctified through the Truth; and while in the World, kept from the Evil. 2. That they might be united and made *One*, yea, perfect in *One*. And 3. That at laſt they might all be with him where he is, and behold his Glory, taken up to the beatifical Viſion, to a conſtant and cloſe Communion, to a full and perfect Fruition of him. And the reaſon of theſe his Deſires, is, becauſe he himſelf was to be no longer with them in the World by his bodily Preſence, verſe 11. *Now I am no more in the world, but theſe are in the world, and I come to thee.* The Work that he came into the World for, was at that time almoſt finiſhed; and the Work which he had to do elſewhere, *viz.* in Heaven, called him away. *I am*, ſaith he, *no more in the world.* The World and I cannot agree. It is a vain, empty, ſinful, wicked, and a malicious World, it refuſeth to be mended, and it cares not to be ſaved, and I have been long enough in it; ſince we cannot agree, we will part. It is weary of me, and I am as weary of it, yea and more weary too: I never taſted of its Pleaſures, and I care not for its Profits; that Work which my Father gave me to do, being done, I will be gone.

I come to thee; with whom it is beſt being, for in thy Preſence there is fulneſs of Joy, and at thy Right-hand Pleaſures for evermore. *To thee*, with whom I was from everlaſting, rejoycing always before thee, and being daily thy delight, having a mutual Delight and compleat Satisfaction each in other. *To thee*, with whom I deſire and long to be. Father, *I come*; as ſoon as ever I have drunk off that Cup which thou haſt given me to drink of, *I come*; and how am I ſtraitned till that be accompliſhed, and glad I am at my very heart, that thereupon I come to thee. *Now* I come, it will be but a little while firſt, and the ſooner the better. I am willing to leave all for thee, to leave the World for thee, yea, to leave my dear Diſciples for thee, tho they be my Friends, the Men of my Choice, the Purchaſe of my Blood, the Members of my Myſtical Body, yet do I freely leave them for thee; Only, Father, I conſider where I leave them, in a World that hates me, and will be ſure to hate them for my ſake; and therefore

therefore while I leave them for thee, I would leave them with thee. I put them into thy hand, let that uphold and defend them; I ſhelter them under thy Wing, let that ſecure and comfort them. I have kept them while I was with them; when I ſhall be gone, do thou undertake and be Surety for them for good, that they may be ſafe in the midſt of Enemies, and ſtedfaſt in the midſt of Temptations and Aſſaults; yea, and chearful too in the midſt of Sufferings and Troubles, having my Joy fulfilled in themſelves. *And now come I to thee.* The Doctrine which from hence I ſhall obſerve and ſpeak to in the following Diſcourſe, is this,

Doct. *An Holy Soul is, and very well may be willing, yea, heartily glad to leave the world; becauſe when it doth ſo, it will go to God.* I look upon the words of the Text, as the Words of one rejoycing; the Language of one whoſe heart did even leap within him; of one whoſe Soul was upon the wing of holy Deſires, longing to be at its home. *Now come I to thee*, and when I once am with thee, I ſhall be where I would be, and with whom I would be; in the beſt place, and with the beſt Company; what ſuits me moſt, and therefore muſt needs pleaſe me beſt. *Now I come to thee*, whom I like abve all, being infinite in all Perfections, and whom therefore I love and prefer before all. *Now I come to thee*, who art mine Eternal Father, and wilt be my Eternal Satisfaction. Our Saviour had before told his Diſciples in John 14. 28. That *if they loved him, they would rejoice becauſe he ſaid, I go to my Father*; becauſe that his departure would be glorious to himſelf, and advantagious to them; but whether they through want of a judicious Love would rejoyce in it or no, he himſelf would perfectly, underſtanding how things were and would be. *Now come I to thee.* Once I came *from* thee to do thy will, and that was pleaſing to me; I delight to do thy Will, O my God, thy Law is within my heart. *Now I come to thee* to enjoy thy Preſence, and that will be to me incomparably, inexpreſſibly ſweet. Thus it was with our deareſt Lord and Saviour, this was the frame, theſe the actings of his Spirit; and thus likewiſe it ought to be with all his People, who were predeſtinated to be conformed to his Image, and who ought to have the ſame mind in them that was in him, for he acted and ſuffer'd, he liv'd and died, leaving us an Example that we ſhould tread in his

Steps. In the Doctrine which I have laid down, there are three things, which we ought to take notice of.

First, *That Gracious and Holy Souls muſt leave this World.* The World to come will be their Eternal Habitation, but in this preſent evil World they will have but a ſhort ſtay. Thoſe that have the largeſt ſhare of its good things, thoſe that are moſt uſeful in it, and live to the beſt purpoſe, ſerving their Generations according to the Will of God, muſt leave it. Their loving Father never intended this for the place for their conſtant Reſidence, nor the Comforts and Enjoyments here for their Portion. The higheſt Heaven is his Throne, the Habitation of his Holineſs and Glory; and he was always reſolved to have his Children about him there. This World is but your School to learn in during your Minority; your Houſe to work in till you have finiſhed what was given you to do; your Tyring-room to dreſs in, that you may be ready for the Marriage of the Lamb; a Stage to act your Part upon, ſee that you ſo quit your ſelves as to be at laſt found to Praiſe and Honour; but it is not to be *your reſt, becauſe it is polluted.* God hath too much of the heart of a Father, and loves his Children too well to keep them always in a Vale of Tears, where they ſhall be frequently Suffering and Sighing, Complaining and Groaning; always in a Wilderneſs that is over-run with Briars and Thorns, and an innumerable company of Beaſts of Prey; the wicked of the World are their irreconcilable Enemies, and implacably hate them, therefore they ſhall not always have them to wreak their Malice and Rage upon. They will for ever envy and gnaſh their Teeth at them, becauſe of their happineſs in Heaven, but they ſhall not for ever exerciſe their Patience, and diſturb their Peace upon Earth. Often O Saints! repeat in your thoughts, that this World is but the Houſe of your Pilgrimage, therefore let not any of you love it too well; but while you live in it, be you weaned from it; remembring there is a better place prepared and taken up for you, whither the forerunner, even Jeſus, is entred, *an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, whoſe builder and maker is God.*

Secondly, *Whenſoever Gracious and Holy Perſons leave this World, they go to God.* The decayed and crazy Body doth no ſooner ceaſe to be any longer capable of houſing ſo noble and excellent a Gueſt

Guest as the Soul, and the Soul doth no sooner dislodge and leave that once-beloved Structure, but that it doth immediately take its flight, and mount up with a swift and speedy Motion, and a direct tendency (without the least and shortest Digression) to its great Creator, even to him who alone is the Father of Spirits. It cares not for any further Converse with things below, being intirely set for Communion with him, by and for whom it was made, and on this side of whom it is, and cannot but be, restless and unquiet. Gen. 5. 24. *Enoch walked with God and he was not, for God took him, i. e.* he took him home; he took him to himself, into the presence of his Glory, into the bosom of his Love. And thus it hath been, is, and will be with all those who walk as *Enoch* did, who tread in the same Steps, and keep up the same Communion; tho indeed they do not all go the same Way, yet they go to the same Place, and to the same God. *Enoch was translated that he might not see death*, Hebr. 11. 5. He was presently carried up to Heaven, having his Soul purified, and his Body freed from Corruption. He was soon cloathed with a glorified Body; as for other holy Ones, tho they see Death, yet they are translated too, carried from Earth to Heaven, from Creatures to God. The Body must descend into the Grave, and there lye putrifying, corrupting, crumbling, until it return to Dust as it once was, but the Spirit returns to God that gave it. I desire you all frequently to call this to mind, and consider it with the greatest seriousness, and see that you have sanctified Souls, Souls rightly prepared, brought into such a frame as may be fit to appear in so glorious a Presence, and converse with so pure and holy a Majesty; that when they return to God they may be welcome to him, and being come into his Presence, for ever dwell and abide there, and not afterwards cast out and banisht as the Object of his loathing.

Thirdly, *Holy Souls may very well be willing, yea glad to go to God.* As a Bride is to go to her endeared Husband; and as a Child at School under severe Discipline is to go to his most affectionate and tender Parents, from whom instead of hard Blows, he shall meet with soft Embraces. Some Saints upon record in Scripture, we find, were in such a frame. Good old *Simeon* was in haste and prayed for his Dismission, Luke 2. 29, 30. *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* Having seen Christ, he would fain see the Father too.

Having

Having got Chriſt in his Arms, he would have the World on his back. He reckon'd that he had liv'd long enough here, and would needs be gone. He had now got his full freight, and therefore deſired to ſet up his Sail for the other World. Having beheld ſo great a ſight as the Lord of Glory, tho but in his Infancy and Swathing-bands, he was loath that his Eyes ſhould be embaſed with the beholding of earthly Vanities any more. *Paul* likewiſe had the ſame thing in his deſire; ſo he told us in *Phil.* 1. 23. *I have a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt.* He would go from all, that he may go to him; and leave all, that he might be with him; and he underſtood himſelf, and acted rationally in this deſire; for *it is*, ſaith he in the next words, *far better.* Heaven is inconceivably better than Earth, when it is in the greateſt Peace, when it expreſſeth the greateſt Kindneſs. He very well knew what he ſaid, he was a competent Judge, having been an Eye-witneſs of the Felicity and Glory above, taken up into *Paradice* into the *Third Heaven.* And tho others have not been partakers of that Priviledge, not ſo rapt as *Paul* was, yet they are of the ſame Judgment, and have the ſame Deſires working in them; therefore he ſpeaks of it as a Spirit and Diſpoſition common to all the Saints while they are in this Tabernacle. Their hearts ſtand Heavenward, as the Needle doth to the *North-Pole*, when it hath been once touch'd with the Loadſtone; as you may ſee in 2 Cor. 5. 2. *In this we groan earneſtly, deſiring to be cloathed upon with our houſe which is from heaven.* They had not only ſome ſmall Inclinations that way, and languid faint Deſires, but earneſt Groans. And again, verſe 8. *We are confident, I ſay, and willing rather to be abſent from the body, and preſent with the Lord.* We are willing, not only *out of neceſſity*, becauſe this is a thing muſt be, but *out of choice*, we had rather leave the Body that we might go to God. But now we are to enquire, why it is thus. And you will find there is ſufficient, yea abundant reaſon for it, if you do conſider theſe four following Particulars:

Firſt, *In going to God, they go to their Father.* This was the comfort and joy of our Saviour's heart; with this he comforted himſelf, and with this he comforted his Diſciples, looking upon it as a Cordial ſtrong enough for them all, John 20. 17. *Go to my brethren, and ſay unto them, I aſcend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.* Mine by Nature, yours by Adoption. I am now going to

to one that I am moſt nearly related to, and moſt fully intereſted in. And in *John* 17. we find him inſiſting and dwelling upon this, as that which he took ſingular delight in, and ſuckt a great deal of ſweetneſs from, *verſe* 1. *Father*, the hour is come. *Verſe* 5. O *Father*, glorify thou me with thine own. *Verſe* 11. I come to thee, *Holy Father*. *Verſe* 21. Thou *Father* art in me, and I in thee. *Verſe* 24. *Father*, I will that they whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am. *Verſe* 25. *O righteous Father*, the World hath not known thee, but I have known thee, *&c.* It is certain, that when wicked Men, the worſt and vileſt of them, dye, they go to God. Did I ſay, Go? Rather, they are forc'd and drag'd againſt their will; they cannot help it. It is to a God that many of them did not believe, but laboured with all their might to obliterate the Notion of his Being, becauſe troubleſome and tormenting to them, Pſalm 14. 1. *The fool hath ſaid in his heart, there is no God.* It is to a God, that none of them cared to know, and be acquainted with; Job 21. 14. *They ſay unto God, Depart from us, for we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways.* Neither of his ways, nor of himſelf. They go to God as their Righteous Judge, but not their reconciled and gracious Father. They are brought before his Tribunal as Malefactors to receive their Doom, but they do not enter into his Kingdom as Children to take Poſſeſſion.

Whereas thoſe that are truly gracious, go to him as a Father; as a Father of Mercies, yea, and as their Father in Chriſt; to him as a God, yea, and to their God in Covenant; to a God and Father, by whom they were begotten, of whom they were born, whoſe Spirit they have received, and whoſe Image they bear. Wicked Men go to God to give an account of what they have done in the Body; and when once Sentence is paſt upon them, and they adjudged to their Place and eternal State, they go to Devils, Matth. 24. 41. *Depart from me ye curſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* You followed his Conduct, you did his Drudgery, now take your Wages with him. Where he is, there ſhall his Servants alſo be. When the Saints go to God, they go to ſtay, and to take up their everlaſting abode with him, Rev. 3. 12. *Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he ſhall go no more out.* As they ſhall be exalted, ſo fixed; their Happineſs ſhall never be abated, their Glory never eclipſed. Once in Chriſt, and ever in Chriſt, there is no total and final falling from Grace; they that are *indeed* planted

planted in the houſe of the Lord, ſhall never be pluckt up; and ſo in the preſent caſe, once in Heaven, and in Heaven to eternity: 1 Theſſ. 4. 16, 17. *The dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt; then we which are alive and remain, ſhall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord.* After that meeting, there ſhall not be a parting any more.

Secondly, *When holy Souls go to God, they ſhall be heartily welcome, and find as loving and gracious a Reception as they can deſire.* When a Sinner doth here in this life by a ſincere Repentance break off from his Sins and returns to God, there is rejoycing above, *Luke* 15. 7, and 10. *There is joy in the preſence of the angels of God over one ſinner that repenteth.* Whereupon *Bernard* ſaid, *The Tears of a Sinner are the Wine of Angels.* At ſuch a time indeed, and upon ſuch an account, Hell is in an uproar, and the Devils fret and rage; they cannot endure to think that they ſhould loſe any of their Prey, and that one of their Vaſſals ſhould be brought into the liberty of the Sons of God: But in Heaven there are Triumphs, and ſinging of *Alleluiahs.* This our *Lord* ſets out in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, upon whoſe return to his Father and his Duty, there were Kiſſes and Embraces, Feaſting and making Merry: The good old Man forgot his Age, and found his Legs, ran to meet him; and the Family following ſo good an example, was in a tranſport.

Juſt ſo there is in Heaven, upon a gracious Soul's arrival there after its diſſolution: The great God doth welcome it; even the whole Trinity; the Father who elected it, the Son who redeemed it, the Holy Ghoſt who ſanctified it. Its old Relations and godly Friends do welcome it, for they will not then be Strangers to one another, but both know and be known. It ſhall be welcom'd by an innumerable company of Angels, who are now miniſtring Spirits unto the Heirs of Salvation, and by the general Aſſembly and Church of the Firſt-born, by all the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect in Heaven. Whatever weeping and mourning, bitter ſighs and lamentations there are here, for being deprived of a faithful Friend; a comfortable Yokefellow; a pleaſant and hopeful Child; a learned, orthodox and painful Miniſter; an uſeful, warm and exemplary Church-member, that did adorn Religion, and credit his holy Profeſſion, there are Triumphs above for the addition of another Star that will for ever gloriouſly ſhine in that celeſtial Orb. Then indeed is that fulfilled which is written in *Pſal.* 45. 14, 15. Thoſe thrice-happy Souls

are

are brought unto the King in rayment of needle-work, a curiouſly embroidered garment, a ſpotleſs beautiful robe of righteouſneſs wrought for them by the hand of Chriſt himſelf; *with gladneſs and rejoicing are they brought*, they do enter into the King's Palace. So ſhall they be received with the higheſt demonſtrations of affection. Chriſt hath moſt graciouſly and faithfully promiſed, that when Sinners do now come unto him, *he will in no wiſe caſt them out*. And when Saints do at death come to him, he will in no wiſe ſhut them out, but an abundant entrance ſhall be miniſtred to them into the glorious Kingdom of their God and Saviour: Yea, and when the Lord Jeſus ſhall have delivered up his Mediatorial Kingdom to the Father, they ſhall ſtill keep the Manſions prepared for them in their Father's houſe, and God himſelf ſhall be all in all to them.

Thirdly, Theſe holy Souls ſhall not only meet with an hearty welcome from God, and all the bleſſed Inhabitants of that Region of Light and Love; but alſo *they ſhall find a moſt ſplendid and glorious entertainment*, ſuch as will evidently ſhew forth the Love, and Greatneſs, and Glory of God himſelf; and not only iſſue in their full ſatisfaction, but likewiſe excite and keep up in them eternal Admirings. There are many Manſions, and a place provided for every one of them, in which they ſhall have room enough, and whatſoever will be pleaſant to them for Delights. A Throne, a Robe of Glory, a Crown of Righteouſneſs, hidden Manna, the Tree of Life, which is in the midſt of the Paradiſe of God; and to render their happineſs complete, thoſe bodies of theirs, which are now bodies of vileneſs, when they come to be raiſed out of their Bed of duſt by the Divine Power, and reunited to their Souls, *ſhall be made like unto Chriſt's own moſt glorious body*, Philip. 3. 21. What ſhall I ſay? Had I the Tongues of men and Angels, I could not ſpeak more than is, the largeſt deſcriptions will fall unſpeakably ſhort; when you come there, you will ſay not one half was told you. I may ſay this in general, in Heaven you will meet with that, which will far more than defray all the Charges you were put to here; that which will abundantly compenſate and make amends for all the hardſhips you endured here. Thoſe that have been the greateſt Sufferers in this world, when they come into the next, will thankfully and chearfully acknowledge they are no Loſers. They ſhall receive that which ſhall richly reward all their pains; ſo that inſtead of complaining their labour is loſt, they ſhall wonder ſuch ſorry ſervices

ſhould be ſo recompenced, and cry, Grace, Grace to it. They ſhall have the accompliſhment of all their hopes, their former askings and thoughts being outdone. That which is laid up for them, and ſhall be given out to them, will tranſcend their higheſt expectations, be a full and complete anſwer to all their Prayers, ſatisfy, ſilence, and put an everlaſting period to all their deſires; for their enjoyments will be ſo great, and their capacities ſo fill'd, that there will be no room left for more. God will then make good all his Promiſes, which are exceeding great and precious, ſo that not one tittle of them ſhall fail; and by this means all tears ſhall be wiped from their eyes, ſorrow and ſighing ſhall flee away, never more to return, and they ſhall enjoy an endleſs Sabbath, an everlaſting Triumph, being fill'd with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory. In ſhort, there is that which mortal eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entred into the heart of man; and though the holy and bleſſed Angels, which kept their ſtanding, and continue to be Heaven's Courtiers, do both ſee and enjoy it, yet they are not able to expreſs it; there is all that which our deareſt Lord Jeſus did purchaſe at the ineſtimable price of his own heart-blood. Now from all this which hath been ſpoken, there is abundant reaſon to conclude

Laſtly, *That thoſe holy and truly happy Souls are better with God in Heaven, than they were while here, or could ever poſſibly have been.* True love is free and liberal to its endeared object, it ſtudieth to be ſo, and takes ſingular pleaſure in it. Thoſe that are kind and affectionate Husbands, and live up to the Law of their Relation, do and will make it their buſineſs and endeavour to make the Lives of their Yokefellows not only eaſy to them, but as comfortable as they can. But alas! how ſhort is their Arm, how many outward and inward Troubles are there which their skill and power cannot reach? But it muſt be granted, all that which they can do, is not comparable to that which God doth for his People, nor to be named in the ſame day with it. All that own a God, muſt acknowledge he is infinitely beyond the greateſt of men in power, infinitely above the higheſt and beſt of Creatures in love. What is a broken Ciſtern that will hold no water, to the Well of Salvation, the Fountain of living waters? What is a pitiful little Drop, but one remove from nothing, to the boundleſs, bottomleſs Ocean of Being and Goodneſs? Suppoſe there were ten thouſand thouſand worlds, and put them all together, what would they all be to one God? And then though the enjoy-

enjoyment which the Saints have of God now, doth far exceed all the ſinful and ſenſual enjoyments of carnal and profane Worldlings, which was the reaſon why *Moſes* did eſteem the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures of *Egypt*, and rather choſe to ſuffer affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy *the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon*; and made that Noble *Italian* Marquis *Galeaceus* ſay, *Curſed be that man who counts all the world worth one hours enjoyment of Jeſus Chriſt.* Yet compare the beſt, and fulleſt, and ſweeteſt of the Saints enjoyments here, with thoſe in the manſions above, and they fall exceeding ſhort of them; for, what is ſitting under the ſhadow of Chriſt, to the beholding of his glory? what is the joy of Faith, to that of ſight? what is a love-letter, or meſſage of peace, or kind token from God now and then, to a lying in his boſom, to a being and continuance in his joy? what is ſeeing of his power and glory in the Sanctuary, to the beatifical Viſion? what is ſeeing in a glaſs darkly, to a ſeeing face to face; ſeeing as we are ſeen, and knowing as we are known? what are the firſt-fruits of the Spirit, to the whole harveſt? what ſome *Prælibamina*, foretaſtes, to a ſitting down with *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, in that Kingdom of God at the feaſt of glory, and there taking the fill of love to all eternity? while the Saints are preſent in the body, they are abſent from the Lord, and a ſtate of abſence neither doth nor can afford ſatisfaction; the holy Soul during that, will with the enamoured Spouſe be longing and crying, *Make haſte my Beloved, and be thou like a Roe or young Hart upon the mountains of ſpices.* It is only in the glorious preſence of God that ſuch an one will find a *fulneſs of joy*, and *at his right hand thoſe pleaſures which are for evermore.* Let us now come to the improvement of this Point in a way of Application, and the firſt Uſe ſhall be for Information, in three things: If it be juſt matter of rejoicing to holy Souls, that at death they go to God; then from hence,

Firſt, We may learn *the folly and miſery of thoſe who do now depart from God*; whoſe lives are nothing elſe but a continual departure from him. Yea, in the very Acts of Worſhip, when they draw nigh to him with their lips, their hearts are eſtranged and far from him, running after their covetouſneſs. The folly that is in this courſe of life is very apparent, and the miſery that certainly attends it, will be one day no leſs ſenſible; but there are too too many among us guilty

hereof; ſome through the principle and power of *Unbelief*; their not giving credit to the reports of the Word, neither to its dreadful Threatnings, nor to its ſweet and gracious Promiſes. Do you, I beſeech you, look carefully to it, that there be not in any of you an *evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.* Others, yea and the ſame perſons too, make this departure from God *out of love to the world*; *for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* And it is no wonder to ſee men going from that place and company where and with whom they do not love to be; have a care of the world therefore, let it not bewitch you. While ye live in it, be ye not devoted to it, but weaned from it. If you do ſet your hearts upon the world, you will turn your back upon God. *Demas*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *hath forſaken me*; and in forſaking him, he forſook *Chriſt*: what was the reaſon of it, but his embracing *this preſent world*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 10. How powerful and prevalent are theſe two things, *unbelief, and love of the world*, with the generality of men! what a vaſt multitude of perſons do they carry away from God! What is there that in a moral way he could have done more, than that which he hath done? He hath frequently and loudly called them by meſſenger after meſſenger; he hath moſt graciouſly invited them, moſt lovingly and ſweetly allur'd them, and uſed variety of means and arguments to conquer their averſneſs, to convince their judgments, to gain their hearts, and bring them to him; yet, after all, he hath cauſe to complain, *Ye will not come to me that ye may have life.* Nay, inſtead of coming to him, they are running further and further from him, as if they thought they could never be at too great a diſtance; whereas they have no cauſe to run from God, for in ſo doing *they run from life*, and reſt, and happineſs, and into the mouth of ruin and deſtruction, and are *too far removed from him already.* They are already *without God in the world*, Epheſ. 2. 12. They were born with their backs upon God, were Tranſgreſſors from the womb, going aſtray, ſpeaking and ſeeking Lyes, and ſo they continue to do, for every wilful Sin is a ſtep from God. Now I would deſire ſuch to conſider, and that ſeriouſly, whether this their way be not their folly. The Scripture doth expreſly tell us, *They that are far from him ſhall periſh*, Pſal. 73. 27. and that *he hath deſtroyed all them that go a whoring from him.* And as he hath done, ſo he will go on to do; for he is in one mind, and in this caſe Repentance ſhall be hid from his eyes. And to this add one Conſideration more, You

muſt

must appear before him at the laſt whether you will or no; though you ſhould call to the rocks to cover you, and the mountains to fall upon you, and hide you from the wrath of the Lamb, and from the face of him that ſitteth upon the Throne, yet you muſt appear. Now you will not be invited to him as a Saviour; then you ſhall be dragged before him as a Judge. Suppoſe you ſhould then beg and plead, *Lord, Lord, open to us*; what anſwer can you look for at his hands but this, *Depart from me, for I know you not.* And how do you think he ſhould know you, ſince as long as you liv'd, you would never acquaint your ſelves with him. Oh poor ſinners! be wiſe while you may, and know aſſuredly, it is beſt going to him now for a pardon, and grace, and acceptance, before you go to him to receive your final Sentence. If you will not now go to him as humble Penitents, with Confeſſions and Supplications, that your Sins may be blotted out, you ſhall come to him as Criminals in order to execution; and if you deſire to know aforehand what your puniſhment will be, you may read it in 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 8. *Everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.*

Secondly, We may from hence learn, *what our life in the world ſhould be:* It is a matter of very high and near concernment for men and women to underſtand themſelves well in this particular, to know what they ſhould be and do, and how they ſhould live, that they may be approved; and truly our life ſhould be a coming to God, and a walking with him. In the firſt Converſion there is a facing about, a turning of the mind and heart to God. *Chriſt* ſent *Paul* to the *Gentiles, to turn them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan to God.* And after the firſt turn is made, there ſhould be a further returning; all the actions of the life ſhould be ſo many ſteps back to God. This was the great deſign and end of our *Lord Jeſus* in his dying, not only that he might bring pardon and peace to men, but alſo that he might bring men to God, bring them into favour with God, yea, and into obedience and conformity to him, and into a communion and converſation with him, 1 *Pet.* 3. 18. *He ſuffered, the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God.* Now ſince that was the gracious deſign of Chriſt, the bleſſed and noble end he had in his eye, and was willing to be at ſo much coſt for the accompliſhment of, ſhall not we comply with him therein? ſhall it not be in our heart, as well as in his? And ſince we have ſo great an excellent Perſon to take us by the hand and introduce us, and bring

bring us in and preſent us to the Father, let us go, let us not draw back, let us not ſtand queſtioning and diſputing, and ſaying, *Shall I, ſhall I?* this is a meer loſs of time, let us go preſently, the ſooner the better. You have heard that you muſt go at laſt, yes, you muſt, there is no poſſibility of avoiding it, and therefore let us all be perſuaded, and heartily willing to go now. *To day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.* Go now to God in your Mind and Thoughts, in your Hearts and Affections, before you go in your Perſons. Get as much of Heaven as you can before-hand. The *Pſalmiſt* ſaid, Pſalm 73. ult. *It was good for him to draw night to God.* And without peradventure, it is full out as good now as it was then, as good for us as it was for him. It is both a pleaſant good, and a profitable one. Let us therefore do it, yea, and be drawing nearer and nearer to him every day, never thinking our ſelves near enough ſo long as we are in a far Country, and till we come to be with him in Heaven. And yet again, let us not think it enough to to be making frequent approaches to him in Holy Duties, and in Goſpel Ordinances, which are as a *Jacob*'s Ladder, upon which the holy Soul aſcends and makes its ſpiritual advances, but keep up a daily Walk with God, as *Enoch* and *Noah* did in their Generations; maintain an intimate and conſtant Communion with him, that you may be able to ſay with *Paul*, *Our Converſation is in Heaven.* And with *John*, *Truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Oh how Noble is it to converſe with God! it meliorates and raiſeth, and ſpiritualizeth the Soul; it never is with him, but it comes away better from him; and how ſweet is it, God being pleaſant for delights; for certain you will find and judge it ſo, when you do once come by experience to know what it is, you will then ſay as *Peter* did upon the Mount of Transfiguration, *It is good, Lord, to be here.*

Thirdly, We may from hence learn that, *It is very much our Intereſt, and therefore our wiſdom to bid God heartily welcome, whenſoever he is geaciouſly pleaſed ſo far to condeſcend as to come to us.* You have heard, and I hope you believe, that it is appointed for all Men once to dye, and when we do dye, let it be in what way it will, and by what ſtroke it will and let us be in what State and Frame we will, we muſt all of us go to God, all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt. And let us think with our ſelves what Entertainment we would have then; how we would have Chriſt carry toward us.

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Do not we desire that he should *receive us graciously*, and bid us welcome as some of his old Friends and Acquaintance? Would we not be glad to hear him owning us before his Father and the Holy Angels, and saying to us, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you?* I do not in the least question but you would. Then I counsel you, that in order thereunto, you would now carry kindly toward God, and receive him as it becomes an infinite Great, Holy, and Glorious Majesty to be received. Know this, such is his Goodness that he often comes to you. Frequently *in his word*, therein he discovers and reveals his Mind and Will concerning you, opens to you the Mysteries of his Kingdom that were kept hid from Ages and Generations, from the Wise and Prudent of the World. Bid him welcome, and his Word welcome, say with *Hezekiah*, *Good is the word of the Lord*; yea, those Precepts of it that are most contrary to corrupt Nature, and those threatnings of it that are most tremendous and startling. Receive it into your Hearts as well as into your Heads, and let it dwell richly in you. Do not imprison any word of God, as *Asa* did one of the Messengers that brought it; do not rebel against the Light; do not hold any truth in unrighteousness. Sometimes he comes to you *by his Spirit*, in such and such an holy Motion, awakening you out of your Sleep and Sloth, reducing you from such a wandering, calling you to such a Word and Duty. Now, do not you *resist* him, but submit and comply; do not you *quench* him, but bring fewel rather: do not *grieve* him, but labour to be his Delight and Joy. Carefully listen to his Voice, and make speed to follow his Ducture, as *Paul* did immediately, not consulting with Flesh and Blood when God had once revealed his Son in him. The Spouse was guilty of vile Ingratitude, and sinn'd grievously in lying lazily, and asking her self a company of simple questions, *I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?* Which spake her loath to stir, when her beloved who had done a great deal more, and deserved much better at her hands, stood all the while without knocking at the Door, calling and begging for Admittion, Cant. 5. 2. *Open to me my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled.* One would have thought such language of Love should have melted, should have raised her. Do not you contract upon your selves guilt of the same kind; therefore my advice to you shall be the same with what you find in Psalm 24. 7. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors;*

and

and the king of glory ſhall come in. Follow this advice, will you? Oh that you would, remembring that you your ſelves muſt one day go to God, and let that influence you to ſuch a demeanour of your ſelves toward him now, as that you may not at laſt find the Door ſhut againſt you, and be forced to ſtand without calling and crying in the bitterneſs of your Souls, *Lord, Lord, open to us*, but *may have an entrance miniſtred to you abundantly into the glorious kingdom of your God and Saviour*; Know for certain, the very ſame meaſure you mete out, ſhall be meted into you again; with the pure he will ſhew himſelf pure, and with the froward he will ſhew himſelf froward. If you will be deaf to his call now, he will not hear yours at laſt, Prov. 1. 24 &c. *Becauſe I have called, and ye refuſed; I have ſtretched out my hand, and no man regarded. When your fear cometh as deſolation, and your deſtruction cometh as a whirlwind; when diſtreſs and anguiſh cometh upon you, then ſhall they call upon me, but I will not anſwer; they ſhall ſeek me early, but they ſhall not find me.*

The ſecond Uſe that I ſhall make of this Point, ſhall be for Examination: Let you and me fall to work, and put our ſelves upon the Scrutiny, for I can aſſure you, it will be no loſt labour to ſearch and try our ſelves, whether we are ſuch, and our State ſuch, as may at a dying hour be willing to go to God, and may at the preſent rejoyce in the thoughts of it; and ſo, tho we muſt expect to fall by the ſtroke of Death, yet we are deliver'd from the fear of Death. And in order to the reſolving of this great caſe, let us proponnd to our ſelves theſe three Queſtions, and deal faithfully with our own Souls, for it is dangerous, yea ruinous to be deceived in a matter of ſo great importance.

Firſt, *Hath there been reconciliation made between God and you.* Is it Peace, O my Soul, is it peace? There was a breach, each, that breach ſprung up to an Enmity, that Enmity produc'd a War; you have been fighters againſt God, there have been Acts of Hoſtility, how is it now? Is that Breach made up, is that Enmity taken away, and the War at an end? There hath been Peace offered to you, and moſt condeſcending gracious Terms propounded, have you accepted and cloſed with them? It cannot but be a moſt dreadful thing for a poor Creature to find it ſelf at laſt no other than a veſſel of wrath fitted for deſtruction, one in whom God can have no pleaſure. It

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is a dreadful thing for one that lived a pitiful life, and had little else but trouble in this world, to find it unspeakably worse in the next, trouble here, and torment there. A dreadful thing for one that was cloathed with Silk and Velvet, far'd deliciously every day, swam in pleasures, and had the world at will, to lie down in sorrow upon a Bed of Flames, where throughout Eternity he cannot procure a moment's ease, nor a drop of water to cool his tongue. How sad will it be, when a poor Soul is deprived of those comforts and delights which it eagerly hunted after, and plac'd its happiness in, and is turned out of house and home; its old tabernacle of the body being so weak and crazy, that there is no possibility of continuing there any longer, and goeth naked to God, who alone is able to afford it succor and relief, and then it findeth that he is an enemy to it, and will not give it one good word or look, nor receive it into everlasting habitations. Well, do you now think seriously of it, God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and he hath committed to us the Word of reconciliation, and we as the Embassadors of Christ, and Messengers of Peace, have sounded this Word in your ears; and as tho *God did beseech you by us, we have often and often prayed you in Christ's stead that ye would be reconciled to God.* Now enquire how hath this Word wrought upon you? Hath it come to you not in Word only, but also in Power? What effect hath it had? Is the enmity that was in your hearts and natures to God slain? Have you thrown down your Weapons of Rebellion? Are you reconciled unto God? Have you laid hold by an hand of Faith upon *Christ*, who is his strength, in order to the making of peace with him? He hath promised that in that way you shall make peace with him, otherwise never expect it, for it will be but in vain; to persons out of *Christ*, *he is a consuming fire, and everlasting burnings.* Have you submitted to God, and stoop'd and bow'd to his Government? Do you like and love his Law? Are you desirous that he should reign over you, and erect his Throne in you? Set this down with your selves as a most certain truth, that unless you receive him for your Lord and King, you will never find him your Friend.

Secondly, *Can you say as* Christ *did in this Chapter, that you have glorified God upon earth?* All the glory that great Personages, Lords and Ladies, Kings and Queens have now, will not stead them, nor comfort them at the last, but their having brought glory to God in their generation, and several places. *Christ* did this, and he found

the thought of it ſweet to him, he reflected upon it with joy; and this all of us ſhould do too in our meaſure, and to the utmoſt of our power: for this was the end of our Creation, for this we were ſent into the world, without this we live to no purpoſe; and without this we cannot rationally expect to be accepted of him, or glorified by him. But here ſome poor humble Chriſtian may object againſt its ſelf, and ſay, When you ſpeak of my glorifying God, it ſtrikes all my hopes dead, for I have not done it, nay, I have not been in a capacity of doing it. What glory can the infinitely great and ever-bleſſed God (who is exalted above all bleſſing and praiſe) poſſibly receive from ſuch a ſorry contemptible Worm, ſuch an earthen Veſſel, ſuch a broken Potſherd as I am? I do with grief and ſelf-abhorrence own and acknowledge that I have highly diſhonour'd him, being a diſcredit to his holy and reverend Name while I was called by it, and a diſparagement to Religion while I made a profeſſion of it. But let me ask thee, Was not the glory of God dear to thee, and his Name precious? Was he not higheſt in thy eſteem, valued above all the world, ſet up in the Throne, all other things being made his Footſtool? Canſt thou not with all thy heart ſay after the Prophet in *Pſal.* 73. *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſide thee?* Haſt thou made him thy choice, and deſired to live in an obedience to him, and expreſſiveneſs of him? Haſt thou commended him to others, thy Relations, Friends and Neighbours, and endeavoured in thy place to enlarge his Kingdom, and ſubmit themſelves to his Government? Haſt thou offered thy ſelf and *thy praiſe* to him? He himſelf tells thee, Pſal. 50. 23. *That is a glorifying him.* Haſt thou had thy fruit unto holineſs, and was thy heart ſet for the bringing forth much fruit? Our Saviour tells you, *John* 15. 8. *Herein his Father is glorified.* If thou doſt find theſe things in thy ſelf, tho thou doſt alſo find too much of that which ſhould not be, and is matter of grief to thee, thou may'ſt meditate terror without being terrified, thou may'ſt be very willing, yea glad to die, whenſoever God calls thee to it, being fully perſuaded that he will with an hand of grace put a glory upon thee, when at the ſame time he will extort glory from others in a way of wrath and vengeance.

Thirdly, *Can you ſay as our Saviour did, I have finiſhed the work which thou gaveſt me to do?* He had work given him by the Father, good and great work, in which his Father, himſelf, and all his people were

were concerned, it being for his Fathers and his own Glory, and for his Peoples Salvation and everlaſting Happineſs. And he was intent upon it, induſtrious and diligent in it. *I muſt*, ſaith he, *work the works of him that ſent me while it is day.* And at his giving up of the Ghoſt, he could ſay, *It is finiſhed.* Now none of us were made and ſent hither to be idle, nor to ſport upon the Earth as *Leviathan* doth in the Sea. No, no, we all have Work to do, Work that our heavenly Father hath given us. There is the general Work of Godlineſs and Religion, and the particular Work of our ſeveral Stations and Relations. None need ſit ſtill and ſtudy how to paſs away the time, for they have enough to do if they will but mind it. Now if our Work be not done, how ſhall we with any comfort or boldneſs look our great Lord and Maſter in the Face. It was a terrible Sentence that paſt upon the lazy Servant that had buried his Talent in a Napkin. But here again, a poor humble Chriſtian will preſently object againſt its ſelf; for ſuch an one needs none Accuſer, he can and will do that work faſt enough. And in this caſe he will take ſhame as his Portion, and declare he is very far from finiſhing the Work which God gave him to do. You have minded other things of leſs concern, yea of no concern, and neglected that. You have lived in the World to very little purpoſe, led unprofitable Lives, and ſuffered your Days, your precious Seaſons, your golden Hours to run out at waſte. You have done but very little for God, and for your Souls, and in order to your everlaſting Happineſs; and that which you have done, hath been ſo pitifully done, that you are aſham'd to look upon it; you have botcht and bungled at it. And I do readily grant, your beſt Works do not deſerve acceptance with God; he may juſtly reject and abhor them, and caſt them as Dung into your Faces, becauſe of the Iniquities which adhere or cleave to them. But let me ask you, and do you ask your own Souls when you are in your Retirements and greateſt Seriouſneſs, Haſt thou loved the Work of God, and preferred the hardeſt and moſt unpleaſing pieces of it before the moſt facil and pleaſant parts of the Devil's? Haſt thou counted his Service perfect freedom, but that of Sin the baſeſt of Drudgeries? Have you been pleaſed and delighted when you did at any time find your hearts raiſed in it, and enlarged, and more than ordinarily carried out? Hath it been your Grief and Trouble when you found in your ſelves ſtraitneſs, deadneſs, and dulneſs? Have you been angry with your ſelves, becauſe you have done no more and no better for God?

Have you often and often with earneſtneſs begg'd of God that he would give you more Grace and greater Strength in order to your doing him better Service, and bringing him more Glory? Then you need not be afraid to appear before him, for *he will ſpare you, as a Father ſpareth his Son that ſerveth him*; and you ſhall be *accepted in* the beloved; and your gracious and prevailing *Advocate* will appear on your behalf, and plead your Cauſe, ſaying, as once he did on the behalf of the good Woman, whom the Diſciples in their diſcontent quarrel'd, *They have done what they could.* And he will cover all your Failings, and fill up all your Vacancies and Defects with his own moſt full and perfect Obedience; for to your comfort know, tho thy Duties be weak, and deficient, and defiled, yet his Obedience was compleat and perfect; nay more, it was Satisfactory too, and of a meritorious Nature too, and the merit of it is ſufficient for thee, and for all his People. And therefore if that which I have ſpoken be the frame of your Spirits, you may at a dying hour with triumph ſay, *Now, Father, come I to thee.*

We will now proceed to the third Uſe of this Doctrine, which will be by way of Exhortation; and it ſhall be divided only into Two Branches.

My firſt Exhortation is this, *Do not mourn immoderately over your deceaſed Friends and Relations.* Thoſe of them I mean, who while they were here, *lived unto the Lord*; and when they had finiſhed their courſe, and came to the period of their Days, thoſe Bounds which they could not paſs, *died in the Lord, and in the faith.* As to the buſineſs now in hand, it is no matter by what they died, whether a natural Death or a violent one, by the hand of an Enemy or an Executioner; conſumed by the mercileſs Flames, or ſwallowed up by the mighty Waters; whether they died a ſhort and eaſy Death, and having ſerv'd their Generation according to the Will of God fell aſleep, or a tedious and lingring one, caſt upon Beds of Languiſhment, and having weariſom Days, Nights, and Months, numbred out unto them. Nor is it as to this any matter in what manner they died, whether under a dark and thick Cloud, having many Queſtions, Doubts, and Fears; or under the Smiles of God, the Light of his Countenance, and the bright ſweet ſhining of his Face; whether they came to their Harbour in a pleaſant Calm, or in a bluſtering Storm. In a word, whether they had the perfect uſe of their Underſtanding and Reaſon to the laſt, or were under a *delirium* and diſtraction. Theſe things

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are not ſo much to be inſiſted upon. Were they Holy and Gracious? Were they born twice before they died once? Were they partakers of the Holy Ghoſt in his renewing Influences? Was their Walk with God, and their Motions toward Heaven? Did they carry Grace along with them into the other World, and leave good ground of Hope in this concerning them? Then keep your Grief within its due bounds. You may, yea you ought to be ſenſible of God's hand, and of your own loſs, and of the Nations and Churches loſs. God would not have his Children ſtupid, he allows not in them a *Stoical Apathy*. *Paul* doth not forbid all Mourning upon this account, but would not have yours like that of theirs who mourn without hope. You may be ſenſible, but not ſink; drop ſome Tears over ſuch an one's Herſe, but not be drown'd in Sorrow. While by your Sorrow and Tears you expreſs the dearneſs of your Affection to your deceaſed Friend, be ſure that by your patient Submiſſion and humble Silence, you do equally manifeſt your Faith and Hope. And to that purpoſe I offer theſe Four following Particulars to your Conſideration.

Firſt, *Your departed Relations and Friends are gone to him that loved them beſt, and that both can and will do moſt for them.* To him that is all Love, and hath all Power. To him who hath Earth with all its fulneſs, Heaven with all its Glory at his own diſpoſe, and is himſelf alone better than both. They are gone indeed, and ſhall not return; their Places here will know them no more. Oh! ſaith one, my Husband is gone, and he was my Guide and my Support. He lived with me as a Man of Knowledge, and helped me on in the way everlaſting. And ſaith another, My Wife is gone, and ſhe was a ſuitable Yoke-fellow, a delightful Companion, the deſire of mine Eyes. And ſaith another, My Child is gone, and it was a pleaſant One, the Child of my Hopes, but now that is gone, that Bud is nipt, and thoſe Hopes are blaſted. And ſay others, Our Shepherd is gone, who led us by the skilfulneſs of his Hands, brake to us the Bread of Life, and fed us with ſound Knowledge and Underſtanding. Theſe are gone, and gone for ever, and they will not return any more; and you ſay true, for they cannot, Job 14. 14. *If a man dye, ſhall he live again?* Yes, in another World, (*Job* did not queſtion that, but rejoyced in the Faith of it) but not again in this World. The moſt holy Perſons that lived beſt, and pleaſed God moſt, cannot return to live again here; and indeed as they cannot, ſo they would

not

not; if they could, they would not. For remember this, as they are gone from hence, and from you, ſo they are gone to God, and to Heaven. They are gone, but it is from their Labour to their Reſt, to an undiſturbed and everlaſting Reſt, after a wearisome and tedious Life. They are gone, but it is from the *Work* of their Lord, in which they were faithful and induſtrious, to the Joy of their Lord, which nothing ſhall imbitter, neither can any take it from them. God will not, Enemies ſhall not. They are gone, but it is from a life of Conflicts which they had with the Corruptions of their own Hearts, and the Temptations of Satan, to maintain an everlaſting Triumph with the Lord Jeſus, the Captain of their Salvation. In ſhort, They are gone, but it is out of the Wilderneſs which was over-run with pricking Briars and vexing Thorns, and full of Beaſts of prey, Lyons roaring, and Serpents hiſſing, the Devil and his Inſtruments creating them all the trouble they can; and now they are entred into the Cœleſtial *Canaan*, a Land flowing not with Milk and Honey, but unſpeakably better Enjoyments, infinitely purer and higher Delights. Do but you tread in their Steps, and follow them in their Faith and Holineſs, conſidering the end of their Converſation, and then you ſhall meet them again, and that meeting ſhall be with Joy.

Secondly, *Tho they be gone, yet their time of going was firſt come.* The Apoſtle *Paul* ſpeaks of *a time* of departure, 2 Tim. 4. 6. *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.* The time which God in his infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs had ordained and prefixed by an eternal and unalterable Decree. They liv'd till the laſt Sand in their Glaſs was run out, till they had reached thoſe Bounds which they could not paſs. There is one thing which ſome ſurviving Relations do moſt unreaſonably afflict and torture themſelves with, notwithſtanding all the care they have taken, it is this; they think if this or that had been done, their deceaſed Relation might have been ſtill alive; but that is a fooliſh Fancy, and I am apt to think it a Suggeſtion of the Devil, who thereby would pour Vinegar into that Wound which Providence hath made; for if this and that, and an hundred, nay, a thouſand things more had been done, they all would not have kept them here. It is indeed unqueſtionably our Duty to be in the diligent uſe of all lawful means for the preſervation of Health, the cure and removal of Diſeaſes, and the continuance of our own and our Relations Lives, and a known wilful

wilful neglect of any doth bring guilt with it, and may breed a painful ſting in the Conſcience; but all the means that can be uſed cannot poſſibly hinder the accompliſhment of any of the divine purpoſes; *Who hath reſiſted his Will?* and who can reſiſt it? Will you conſider this, and work it upon your hearts by repeated thoughts? ſuch Friends and Relations of yours are gone, but not before they were ſent for. *God* bid *Moſes* go up to Mount *Nebo*, and die there; the ſame God (in whoſe hand our times are) did alſo bid them lie down upon ſuch a Bed, and die there. Death was God's Meſſenger, he commiſſion'd it, and gave it his order, its work was to cut off the thread of their lives, and fetch them home; and that work muſt be done, how unacceptable and afflictive ſoever it is to any, yea, and it muſt be done at that very time too. Tho in other things God exerciſeth admirable patience, waiting that *he might be gracious*; and being exulted, that *he might have mercy upon ſinners*; yet in this caſe he will not ſtay, nor is it at all fit that he ſhould, nor is it lawful for any to deſire it. What reaſon can be given why Infinite Wiſdom ſhould give way to humane weakneſs and folly, or why God ſhould in the moſt minute and ſmalleſt Circumſtance act counter to his own moſt Holy Will and Purpoſe for the gratifying of our humour and imprudent deſires; let us leave God to chuſe and order, as being beſt able, and learn our ſelves to ſubmit and accept; and ſince Death muſt and will do its work at its time, let us be before-hand, and do our work in our time; ſince Death will not ſtay for us nor any body, let us ſo prepare and get ready, that we may not have cauſe to deſire its ſtay.

Thirdly, *Though they be gone, yet it was not before they were fit to go.* Some of thm liv'd but a little time, but they liv'd much in a little time; and how are they to be commended, and the grace of God to be admired in them, who do happily diſpatch that work in twenty years or leſs, which others, and thoſe holy Souls too, are threeſcore or ſeventy years about. Some die young, it is a ſign they ripened apace. The Husbandman careth not when he pluck's up his Weeds, becauſe they are either for the Furnace or the Dunghil; but his Corn ſhall be white to the Harveſt before he puts in his Sickle. So a wiſe man will let the Fruit of his Orchard hang till it be ripe, and when it is ſo he gathers it. So doth the wiſe and ever-bleſſed God; as for wicked men he is not ſo curious about them, they only cumber the ground, they bring forth wild Grapes, down with them, ſaith Juſtice,

Juſtice, it will be a good riddance, let better be planted in their room; but he doth otherwiſe with the Trees of Righteouſneſs, the ſouls of holy perſons are prepared for glory by that time their bodies drop into the Grave. The marriage of the *Lamb* will not come, before his Bride hath made her ſelf ready. Now is not this enough to ſatisfy you? give one good reaſon if you can, why any ſhould remain upon earth, after they are once truly fit for Heaven? why they ſhould have their days prolonged, when their work is finiſhed? they ſhall not die before it, why ſhould they live here after it? why ſhould they not *receive the Crown of Righteouſneſs, when they have fought the good fight, and finiſhed their courſe, and kept the faith?* To what purpoſe, I beſeech you, ſhould they live, when they have no more grace to get here, and no more good to do? To ſuch an one as loves God dearly, and is ſet for his glory, an uſeleſs, barren, and unprofitable life would be an heavy burden, and a great deal worſe than death: Such an one in ſuch a caſe would not know how to enjoy himſelf an hour, but would long and pine, and cry out for the coming of death, as the Mother of *Siſera* did for her Son, *Why is his Chariot ſo long in coming, why tarry the wheels of his Chariot?*

Fourthly, *As they are gone to God, ſo they had excellent company by the way.* It is not a little diſtance between this earth which the Saints now inhabit, and the higheſt Heaven unto which at death they go, the habitation of God, and ſeat of the bleſſed; and tho the holy Soul be exceeding ſwift in its motion, when it is once freed from the heavy clog of dull fleſh, and got upon the wing, yet will it be ſome time before ſo long a Journey can be diſpatch'd, and it arrive at its deſired home. At the beginning of *Daniel*'s ſupplication the Commandment came forth, and the Angel *Gabriel* was cauſed to flee ſwiftly, yet he came not to him till the time of the evening oblation. And there is an innumerable number of wicked ſpirits in the way, Legions of *Devils* in the Regions of the Air, which envy the happineſs of thoſe who are to have an everlaſting abode in thoſe places out of which they themſelves were caſt, and therefore will be ſure to do their utmoſt for the diſturbing them in their aſcent. But for the preventing of it, the great and holy *God* hath appointed them a ſtrong *Guard*, in *Hebr.* 1. 14. the holy Angels are ſaid to be *miniſtring ſpirits, ſent forth to minister for them who ſhall be the heirs of ſalvation*, and they take pleaſure in doing ſo. Little do we know the obligations we lie under to them, how much we are beholden to them,

them, how they watch over us, and pitch their Tents about us, and are Assistants to us. Many and many are the good offices which the good Angels do for the Saints while they live, and when they die, they are a strong *Convoy* to their Souls, that will keep off from them all Enemies and Dangers, and bring them with safety and honour into the King's Palace, the Presence-Chamber of their God and Father. Upon all these accounts I counsel you not to lay the reins upon the neck of your passions, nor to mourn over them *who died in the Lord*, as those who have no hope, for they are blessed. When they lived, they were the *habitations of God through the Spirit*; when they died, they *died in the Lord*, and their bodies *sleep in Jesus*; their Souls upon dissolution, are the *charge of Angels*. It was they that carried the Soul of poor, but precious *Lazarus* into the bosom of *Abraham*, tho the rich *Glutton* suffer'd him to lie in his Rags and Sores, starving at his door, neglected and despis'd; and both their souls and bodies, at the Resurrection of the Just, shall have a consummate happiness in the full, uninterrupted, and eternal enjoyment of God. Therefore, I say again, mourn not for them, there is no cause, they are in a far better condition than you; turn your Grief into another Channel, and, as our Saviour directed, *weep for your selves, and for your children*, on the score of what you have lost, and what you may feel in this world of sin and uncertainty.

The second Branch of this Use of Exhortation will be this, *Be you willing to go to God also, whensoever he shall please by death to send for you.* You, I mean, who have been indeed made partakers of grace; who love God, and have made him your choice, and have good hope, yea, assurance of your interest in him. It would be a shame for any of you to be unwilling and loth to die, God may very well take that unkindly at your hands, and you for it have reason to be displeas'd and angry with your selves. What is there upon *earth* that should make you unwilling? What is there in *Death* that should affright and scare you? Have you great affliction and trouble here, would it not be better for you to be out of it; to exchange a tempestuous Sea for an Haven of Peace? Do you now swim in Delights, and abound with Creature-comforts, shall you not find better in Heaven, than those you leave behind you? Would you stay yet longer, that so you might provide for your Children, and see them setled well and comfortably in the World? Will you not commit them to the care of your heavenly Father, who is their God in Covenant as well as yours? Can you trust God with your *Souls*, and will you

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them, how they watch over us, and pitch their Tents about us, and are Assistants to us. Many and many are the good offices which the good Angels do for the Saints while they live, and when they die, they are a strong *Convoy* to their Souls, that will keep off from them all Enemies and Dangers, and bring them with safety and honour into the King's Palace, the Presence-Chamber of their God and Father. Upon all these accounts I counsel you not to lay the reins upon the neck of your passions, nor to mourn over them *who died in the Lord*, as those who have no hope, for they are blessed. When they lived, they were the *habitations of God through the Spirit*; when they died, they *died in the Lord*, and their bodies *sleep in Jesus*; their Souls upon dissolution, are the *charge of Angels*. It was they that carried the Soul of poor, but precious *Lazarus* into the bosom of *Abraham*, tho the rich *Glutton* suffer'd him to lie in his Rags and Sores, starving at his door, neglected and despis'd; and both their souls and bodies, at the Resurrection of the Just, shall have a consummate happiness in the full, uninterrupted, and eternal enjoyment of God. Therefore, I say again, mourn not for them, there is no cause, they are in a far better condition than you; turn your Grief into another Channel, and, as our Saviour directed, *weep for your selves, and for your children*, on the score of what you have lost, and what you may feel in this world of sin and uncertainty.

The second Branch of this Use of Exhortation will be this, *Be you willing to go to God also, whensoever he shall please by death to send for you.* You, I mean, who have been indeed made partakers of grace; who love God, and have made him your choice, and have good hope, yea, assurance of your interest in him. It would be a shame for any of you to be unwilling and loth to die, God may very well take that unkindly at your hands, and you for it have reason to be displeas'd and angry with your selves. What is there upon *earth* that should make you unwilling? What is there in *Death* that should affright and scare you? Have you great affliction and trouble here, would it not be better for you to be out of it; to exchange a tempestuous Sea for an Haven of Peace? Do you now swim in Delights, and abound with Creature-comforts, shall you not find better in Heaven, than those you leave behind you? Would you stay yet longer, that so you might provide for your Children, and see them setled well and comfortably in the World? Will you not commit them to the care of your heavenly Father, who is their God in Covenant as well as yours? Can you trust God with your *Souls*, and will you

not truſt him with your *Seed?* Do you think it is an hard thing to die, cannot God ſtrengthen you for it? Is there a bitterneſs in it, cannot God ſweeten it to you? Cannot he make it eaſy to you, as he hath made it to many of his People? Cannot he by the light of his Countenance, and the witneſs of his Spirit, and the ſhedding abroad of his love in your hearts, mitigate and abate the ſenſe of pain? Look to it that you do not leave him while you live, and then reſt confident of this, that he will not forſake you when you come to die. *David* could ſay, *Pſal* 23.4 *Tho he did walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, he would fear no evil; for God's rod and ſtaff did comfort him.* I am apt to think the pains of Death are worſt at a diſtance, and not ſeldom more terrible to the Spectators than to the Patient. And I do not in the leaſt queſtion, but the throws and agonies of many poor Women in Child-bearing, and thoſe Pains alſo which are cauſed by the Cramp, the Gout, the Stone or Strangury, are far greater and more ſevere than the Pains of Death uſually are. But however, we may be ſure of this, thoſe Pains, be they what they will, are but *ſhort*, if compared with that bleſſed Eternity which ſhall ſucceed them; and ſo *light*, as not worthy to be mention'd the ſame day with that far more exceeding weight of glory which ſhall be graciouſly beſtowed upon them that overcome. So the holy Apoſtle *Paul* ſaith, *Rom.* 8. 18. *I reckon that the ſufferings of this preſent life*, take them altogether from the firſt to the laſt moment, *are not worthy to be compared with the glory which ſhall be revealed in us.* Therefore by Prayer earneſtly beg of God a willingneſs to go to him, and take pains with your own Souls, in order to the working of them up thereunto. Humbly and freely leave it to him, who is infinite in wiſdom to chuſe, *the time* when it ſhall be; to him who is love it ſelf, and whoſe compaſſions do not fail, to order out the *manner* how it ſhall be; only be you careful to prepare and get ready; labour to be fit to die, and meet for the inheritance of the Saints in light; and when that grim Meſſenger comes, bid him welcome, and let your hearts be glad, and your glory rejoice. Do your Souls now at any time wander from God, call them in, and *chide* them home; and when you come to die, *ſing* them home, and the good Lord enable you by being with you while you walk in the valley of the ſhadow of Death, comforting you with his Rod and Staff, giving you to look within the veil, and to ſee your Advocate and Mediator Jeſus at the right hand of God ready to receive you, that ſo you may, as the Protomartyr *Stephen* did, commend your ſpirit into his hand; and beſides what hath been already ſaid, before the time of your

departure

departure come lay your selves in with these comfortable meditations.

First *God, whom you go to, is the best and dearest Friend.* In him there is infinite Fulness and everlasting Love. As the Sun when up and shining forth in his Glory, doth so obscure and darken all the Stars, that in his Presence they hide their Heads and disappear; so doth the Glory of God prevail and triumph over all the Beauty and Glory of the Creature. He hath all Perfections, and is pleasant for Delights. It is his Glory to be Self-sufficient and All-sufficient. He hath enough for himself, and for the holy *Angels*, who look no further and desire no more; therefore he cannot but have enough for you. And as there is All-fulness in him, so All-sweetness too. Here indeed a gracious Soul may sometimes discover that in God which strikes a terror in it. The *Psalmist remembred God, and was troubled*, Psalm 77. 3. The Prophet cried out, *I am undone, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts*, Isa 6. 5. But in the other World, where the sight will be clear and full, you shall see nothing in him, save that which will be your Comfort and Joy. Then every sight of him will be ravishing, and every thought of him precious. He will then be in your Account *altogether lovely*. You will then see he hath such a Glory as knoweth no blemish, such a Fulness as knoweth no defect, so that you cannot desire him better than he is, nor would you have him other than he is; for, as all his Attributes are his own Glory, so they will all contribute to, and issue in your Satisfaction.

Secondly, *Heaven is the sweetest place that you can be in.* We have reason to conclude it must of necessity be so, since God hath chosen it for his own Seat, the place of his own Residence. This World is but a Wilderness since Sin entred into it, that is a *Paradice* far beyond the Terrestial one, out of which our first Parents were driven. This World is but a Dunghil, that is a Mountain of Myrrhs, there be the Beds of Spices. There is nothing to pollute, nothing to offend, no danger of falling, no fear of losing, nothing to disturb the Spirit, to break the Peace, or damp the Joy. Read and consider that excellent Description which is given of the *New Jerusalem* in that Rev. 21. 10. *&c.* some passages whereof are these, *The foundations of the wall garnished with all manner of precious stones, the twelve gates were twelve pearls; the City, yea, the very street of it is pure gold; the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb, are the temple of it; the Glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.* And if there be such a Glory in that great City, which descends from God out of Heaven; what do you think,

and

and how great is the Glory of that great City which is in Heaven? What words are big enough to express it? What mind large enough to conceive it? *Deus & Cælum non patiuntur hyperbolem.* God and Heaven are incapable of an Hyperbole; our most raised and inlarged Thoughts will be too narrow, short and low. I will add but one thing more, and shut up this Discourse.

Lastly, *When once you come to Heaven, you will never be weary of being there.* Here indeed we are quickly weary and tir'd out at the best of our comforts. A Man may lie in a Bed of Down till he is weary, and his Bones ake. He may sit at a noble and sumptuous Feast till he is weary, and would be glad of a dimission. We may pray, and preach, and hear, till we are weary, tho we should not be weary of Gospel-Ordinances and Religious Duties, yet we may be weary in them. But there is no such thing as this in Heaven; no, nothing like it throughout Eternity. The Saints there will neither be weary of God, nor of Heaven, nor of themselves, nor of one another. Their Eye will not be weary of beholding God, and contemplating his Glory, nor the Tongue weary of blessing and praising him, nor Soul and Body weary of maintaining a close and intimate converse with him. As there will be a compleat Enjoyment, so constant and fresh Delight. A Fulness and All fulness of Joy, and that will infallibly afford Pleasures for evermore.

God hath made a great Breach among you, who meet in this place, by taking away his Servant, who labour'd in the Word and Doctrine. It is above Fifty years since our first Acquaintance, we having been of the same College, and under the same Tutor. He was a Learned Man, and as I am perswaded, truly Godly, one that denied himself, and suffered much for Conscience-sake. I came hither to do you good, not to commend him, for that is needless, you having known his Doctrine and manner of Life. His Course is finished, and God hath call'd him home, so that you shall see his Face no more. I beseech you to live the Truths he brought you; and since you are taken with the goodness of this Air, and the pleasantness of this Place for the health of your Bodies; see that you neglect not you Souls, but chearfully allow to the procuring and setling one among you, that may feed you with sound Knowledge and Understanding; by your Liberality therein manifest the value you have for the Gospel; and the good Lord send one, in whose Light you may rejoyce.

F I N I S.